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## Viewing cable 09MEXICO1055, SCENESETTER FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA'S VISIT TO MEXICO

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09MEXICO1055**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09MEXICO1055</a>	<a href="#">2009-04-14 16:11</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Mexico</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://wikileaks.jornada.com.mx/notas/encuentros-entre-obama-y-calderon>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 MEXICO 001055

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM CHARGE D'AFFAIRES LESLIE BASSETT;  
NSC FOR DAN RESTREPO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA'S VISIT TO MEXICO  
CITY, APRIL 16-17,2009

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES LESLIE BASSETT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) and  
(D)

1. (Confidential) Key Points

--Despite the challenges presented by criminal violence in Mexico and the global financial crisis, President Calderon remains an effective and authoritative leader of an economically and politically viable nation. He is genuinely committed to leave a legacy at the end of his term in which the rule of law prevails, Mexico's criminal organizations are much-diminished and the benefits of Mexico's wealth and trade are more widely shared among its citizens. Recognizing our interdependence in each of these areas, he looks forward to building strategic alliances with us to advance common goals in the areas of security, commerce and sustainable economic development.

--President Calderon will seek to engage you on a wide range of issues, but will focus most intently on the domestic security challenges facing Mexico from criminal violence. He will be greatly appreciative of U.S. cooperation in this area to date, but will press for even greater engagement on our side of the border to address U.S. demand for illegal narcotics, reverse the upward trend of illegal arms passing into Mexico from the United States and stem illegal money flows to Mexico's cartels.

--Abroad (and to a traditionally inward-looking Mexican public), President Calderon has promoted Mexico as an international player, asserted its place as a regional power and sought to burnish its image as a good place to do business. President Calderon clearly sees the U.S.-Mexico partnership as having positive effects in the hemisphere and hopes to see the U.S. reassert its leadership in the region.

In this regard, he believes the upcoming Summit of the Americas is a key opportunity for you to outline the direction you plan to take your regional policy. Mexico wants to take a low-profile approach as a problem-solver in Port-of-Spain to keep the summit on track. Calderon will be supportive of your vision overall and could be an important partner in keeping grandstanding by certain regional leaders to a minimum.

--Your visit will cement already solid relations between two countries with deep historic ties. While close partners, however, Mexico and the United States continue to experience growing pains associated with expanding trade and broadening security cooperation. Differences are manageable if we approach them in the spirit of cooperation among equals. President Calderon is eager to establish both a close personal and cooperative working relationship with you and will be seeking confirmation that you view him as a true partner.

¶2. (C) Clearly Mexico is not an impending failed state, as some in the U.S. have described, but there are serious consequences of failure if President Calderon does not succeed in containing Mexico's criminal organizations. In all likelihood, Mexico's federal system would be significantly undermined should the cartels retain and strengthen their presence in Mexico's periphery. Mexico's political class and public, while currently supportive of the president's drive against the cartels, could slip back into the complacent mindset that characterized the early decades of the drug-trade here. Our bilateral law enforcement dialogue could revert back to the antagonistic finger-pointing on crime and violence of previous years. Flow of drugs across our southern border would certainly increase, feeding drug-abuse and criminality in the U.S. Ultimately, violence and lawlessness along our common border would seriously impede the robust trade which has benefited both countries greatly in recent decades and reduce our ability to secure our southern border.

¶3. (SBU) Recognizing these dangers, President Calderon remains committed to improving the country's security situation through aggressive law enforcement and reforms to the country's policing and judicial institutions. Few observers believe there are viable short-term alternatives to his strategy of mounting joint military-law enforcement

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anti-narcotic operations which have drawn nearly 40,000 troops into the fray. Most here, however, pin their longer term hopes on the important security and justice reform packages President Calderon stewarded through the Mexican Congress in recent months which, if appropriately implemented, will help to modernize and restructure the country's justice system, as well as improve and better coordinate Mexico's disparate police forces.

¶4. (SBU) President Calderon needs ) and Mexico's public and political class, by and large, appreciate ) the helping hand we have offered. The Merida Initiative provides important material support to President Calderon's strategic goals and, as important, demonstrates shared resolve in facing up to the challenges posed by organized crime. While this initiative was originally conceived of as a three-year plan, it is increasingly apparent the Mexican government anticipates the kind of cooperation and assistance it entails will extend much longer. Recent suggestions in the U.S. that Mexico is unable to govern its territory in the face of criminal violence, have focused attention on what Mexicans think the U.S. itself needs to do, as part of broader Merida cooperation, to help confront the common threat posed by organized criminal networks. President Calderon will surely raise his concern about the flow of arms south. He will likely press you to actively follow up on the recently concluded bilateral arms trafficking conference with concrete actions, including reinstating the assault weapons importation ban which lapsed in 2004. Similarly, President Calderon is committed to improving interdiction of laundered money which feeds cartel operations in Mexico and will encourage you to expand and compliment efforts on both sides of the border. Finally, President Calderon is looking for the U.S. to rededicate itself to combating drug demand at home.

Looking for Opportunities in Troubled Times

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¶5. (SBU) Despite Mexico's having slid into recession as a result of the world financial crisis, things could be worse. Its peso has regained strength against the dollar in recent weeks and its stock market has rebounded to a degree as well. Sound macroeconomic reforms enacted in recent years have significantly buttressed Mexico's ability to withstand the impact of downturns in the U.S. and the world. Still, a stimulus package put together in recent months by the President may not be enough to pull Mexico out of recession

in the near term.

¶6. (SBU) Fully 82 percent of Mexico,s exports go to the U.S. and we remain by far the country,s largest source of foreign investment. Mexico,s long-term prospects are tied to ours and President Calderon is particularly mindful of the positive impact NAFTA has had on both our economies. He is keen to avoid nasty trade disputes that might undermine commitment to the treaty in both countries. While he believes recent events such as the cessation of the cross-border trucking model program mark a step backwards towards protectionism, he will focus his discussion on ways we can move the economic relationship in positive directions.

He has said he wants to build on NAFTA,s accomplishments and would consider strengthening side agreements in labor and the environment, if doing so did not undermine the existing treaty. With other delegations he has recently raised Mexico's interest in expanding NADBank's mandate to include development projects distant from the border. Calderon will certainly query you on the status of an alternative trucking program, and explore how we might constructively approach labor and environmental issues in the context of NAFTA.

¶7. (SBU) An outside-the-box, but clear-headed thinker, President Calderon is looking for new areas in which we might expand our partnership. For example, he believes North America can demonstrate greater leadership on the environment; recognizing your interest in this theme, he may seek your partnership to combat climate change, deforestation and industrial waste and foster the development of clean and sustainable energy sources. Focusing on cooperation on climate change and development of clean energy allows us to deepen our energy relationship while avoiding long-standing Mexican sensitivities about its oil resources. However,

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there may be one sensitive area President Calderon will want to address by asking you to consider negotiating a bilateral treaty on potential cross border oil reservoirs. Without committing to an agreement, you may want to assure him that we are committed to managing potential transboundary reserves equitably.

¶8. (SBU) Calderon may also want to examine ways we can build alliances in areas like healthcare. The U.S. suffers from a shortage of health care workers and health care costs are spiraling. Mexico produces a surplus of health care workers and its health care costs are comparably much lower. President Calderon has spoken of tapping synergies both in terms of labor and services to reduce costs, improve service, and expand flexibility. He may choose to frame his discussion of immigration issues in these same terms, looking for a revival and expansion of our H-2 temporary worker program as an opportunity to marry Mexico,s surplus of low-wage semi-skilled workers to the U.S. shortage of such manpower. He will be interested in hearing about your strategy to pursue immigration reform in the U.S. in the face of the severe economic downturn.

¶9. (SBU) Calderon remains interested in making the U.S.-Mexico border more secure, but also more competitive. He may raise the need for greater investment in port of entry structures along both sides of the border. The Mexican President may also suggest we review usage of shared water resources like the Colorado River. Beyond the Bilateral Relationship

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¶10. (C) President Calderon highly values the unique U.S. ) Mexico relationship and the steps he has taken during his presidency to strengthen it. He also seeks a larger role internationally for his country. President Calderon will use Mexico,s two year tenure on the council to expand Mexico,s growing engagement in the world, and encourage his own countrymen to become more actively interested and involved in world affairs. Mexico,s tenure has so far been positive. We work closely and constructively with its UN team both in Mexico City and New York, and Mexico,s president will be receptive to your encouragement that Mexico take on a more active global role and strengthen its

diplomatic partnership with us.

¶11. (SBU) Regionally, Mexico views itself as a key leader and Calderon,s actions during his tenure have been designed to capitalize on Mexico,s large commercial and cultural footprint in the region. While deeply suspicious of leftist-populism, he has avoided the bitter feuding his predecessor waged with Cuba and Venezuela and sought to normalize relations with the former. He is deeply concerned with the spiral toward lawlessness in Central America and seeks our cooperation, through the Merida Initiative and other programs, to bolster the security and stability of his southern neighbors.

¶12. (C) Just as President Calderon seeks to engage Mexico with the rest of the world, he wants to see the U.S. more engaged in the region. He views U.S. leadership as highly positive (and has lamented that he feels somewhat isolated as one of the few democratically elected regional leaders who is genuinely committed to the free market and to strengthening, rather than undermining, democratic institutions). He believes your presidency will help burnish the U.S.,s image and credibility at as time when empty populism has captured the spotlight in the hemisphere. The upcoming Summit of the Americas is a key opportunity for you to define the terms of your engagement. While worried about the possibility of grandstanding by Venezuela,s Hugo Chavez, and the issue of Cuba being inserted divisively into the agenda, President Calderon is optimistic that your participation in the Summit will help establish a pattern of positive cooperation between you and your regional counterparts. You can expect him to be supportive of your goals for the summit.

¶13. (U) Mr. President, all of us in the Embassy community look forward to your visit to Mexico with great excitement and anticipation. If there is anything I or any member of my staff can do to make your visit a success, please let me know. Bassett

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Partnership Blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap/>  
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